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Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
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Consideration of the Chairman's paper transmitted from the second session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee, together with other relevant inputs to the preparatory process

Letter dated 28 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February 2002, to the Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February 2002, I have the honour to enclose herewith the Joint AMCEN/CAMRE Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development, which was agreed in Cairo on 23 January 2002 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its third session, under agenda item 2.

(*Signed*) Abdalla **Al-Ashtal**
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Arab Group

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Annex to the letter dated 28 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February 2002, to the Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Joint AMCEN/CAMRE Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development

Cairo, 23 January 2002

The Environment Ministers of Africa and the Arab Region attending the Joint Meeting of the bureaux of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), taking into consideration:

- The African Ministerial Statement for WSSD;
- The Arab Declaration for WSSD.

Have agreed as follows:

Emphasising their commitment to continue to work with the international community within the framework of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility between developed and developing countries to achieve sustainable development.

Recognising that there are still many challenges ahead. The discussions at the meetings and subsequent outputs highlight a wide range of issues with respect to sustainable development.

Identifying escalating poverty and high population growth rates as key issues that will need to be addressed at WSSD and that combating poverty represents a basic challenge to the efforts of achieving sustainable development in the two regions. Addressing this issue requires the rational utilization of available resources and the encouragement of a conducive environment for investment at the national and regional levels. It will also require the identification of practical solutions for debt burden and strengthening of the role of the private sector and civil society, including youth and women, in achieving sustainable development.

Recognising that continued population increase and the unbalanced distribution between rural and urban areas, spreading of slums around major cities, increased pressure on the natural resource base, as well as on the public utilities and services, air pollution, and solid waste accumulation are all causes for concern.

Suggesting that the implementation of integrated policies to eliminate poverty could involve:

- Economic reform policies;
- Upgrading the level of general and vocational education;
- Creation of job opportunities for citizens;
- Conservation and rational utilisation of natural resources, enhancement of social security;
- Identification of practical solutions for the debt burden;
- Strengthening of the role of the private sector and civil society, including youth and women, in achieving sustainable development.

Noting that addressing the rapid increase in population in many Arab and African countries and other countries of the world involves:

- Giving greater emphasis to the education of women;
- Strengthening of religious and social programmes to enchance family planning, child and maternal care;
- Providing greater access to family planning advice.

Emphasising the need to establish peace and security as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Outside intervention in internal conflicts and support of military interventions are seen as major obstacles against the establishment of peace and security in the two regions. Equity and respect of countries' rights within the framework of UN resolutions is seen as a major requirement.

Realising the importance of sound management of the use of natural resources, especially water resources and land as two key issues for the two regions, especially when related to food security. It is also noted with concern that over-consumption by many developed nations is depleting the resource base, including biodiversity in many developing countries.

Recognising the importance of technology transfer and promotion of research and development. The limited capacity of academic and research institutions in the developing world and the inability to keep up with the advances in providing technologies for sustainable development should be addressed. Transfer, integration and ownership of modern technologies suitable for the economic, social and environmental conditions in developing countries is crucial.

Requesting the early implementation of the Biosafety Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity to remove the potential for adverse effects of research into genetically modified organisms. Appropriate mechanisms should also be established for the protection of the rights of local communities and farmers in terms of access to biological resources.

Underlining the importance of dealing wisely with globalisation and the impacts that it may bring in order to achieve sustainable development in developing countries. Countries need to adjust their economic and institutional arrangements to make optimum use of the benefits of globalisation and to minimise its negative aspects. Strengthened regional cooperation with regional and global organisations and groupings, which creates improved negotiating positions at global fora was emphasised.

Recognising the importance of human resources and giving greater attention to applying policies that emphasise human health, child and maternal care, caring for the elderly and people needing special care to conserve the family institution. Develop and strengthen educational curricula at all levels, support scientific research and technology centres, and raise the level of public awareness and culture. Exerting greater effort towards the integration between the strategies of health and environment, especially regarding the provision of safe drinking water and food, treatment of municipal waters and solid waste, controlling and reducing the risk

associated with chemicals and pollution in all its forms, as well as genetically modified materials.

Emphasising the importance of good global governance and its implementation. Achieving sustainable development within the context of globalisation, international trade liberalisation, the information technology revolution, and strengthening cooperation between nations on the bases of dialogue and integration of cultures requires more opportunities for developing countries. Good global governance should take into consideration the principles of the Rio Declaration, international law and people's rights in achieving sustainable development.

Looking towards a strengthened role of regional ministerial fora and ministerial councils related to sustainable development in order to implement their strategies and programmes in an integrated manner; development of regional institutions to consolidate the various societal sectors with related government institutions to ensure proper planning and implementation of sustainable development programmes; strengthening partnership with civil society and private sector to widen the base for the decision-making process related to sustainable development; enhancement of the role of the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies relevant to sustainable development, enabling them to implement strategies and programmes of sustainable development in an integrated manner and urging them to strengthen cooperation with regional ministerial fora and their specialised agencies.

Reaffirming solidarity with an extending full support of the decision of the African Heads of State with regards to the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which states "that the revival and development of Africa are primarily the responsibility of the African governments and peoples. Consequently, the African governments are determined to establish the conducive political economic and social environment and create the required structural economic transformation in their countries with the objective of achieving a human centered and sustainable development".

The Ministers representing AMCEN and CAMRE, while reasserting their commitment to pursue sustainable development in their respective countries and at the regional levels, invite WSSD to consider the following:

1. Addressing poverty through the establishment of a partnership between the developed and developing countries, creating enabling environments for investment and ensuring that the World Trade Organization (WTO) does work towards the objectives it was established for, i.e. opening the markets for exports without allowing obstacles that would limit developing countries ability to compete for these markets.

2. Providing financial means of implementation of sustainable development at the international level. Developed countries should fulfil their UN agreed commitment to increase their official assistance to the developing countries to the level of 0.7% of their gross national product (GNP).

3. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) fund should be augmented in accordance with the official level of financial assistance to developing countries, as an important mechanism to fund global environment and sustainable development activities, assign additional financial assistance to the implementation of related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) Programmes and give an equal and fair opportunity to all developing countries

to benefit from GEF, and simplify funding procedures. Encourage foreign direct investment to support national financing resources and efforts of the private sector to achieve sustainable development.

4. The establishment of a global system conducive to the maintenance of peace and security as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

5. There is an urgent need to identify and implement in cooperation with regional authorities and ministerial fora key areas where immediate action is required and which will have the greatest impact on promoting sustainable development. There is also a need to identify appropriate funding mechanisms.

The Ministers therefore propose:

(i) Allocating predictable and adequate funding for the implementation of the MEAs, using the funding of the Montreal Protocol implementation programme as a blueprint.

(ii) Providing the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with a predictable and secure source of funding in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

(iii) Encouragement of micro-economic initiatives, such as Banks of the Poor and micro-loans as a means to empower women and other deprived groups in rural areas and city slums to become part of the local and national market. The international community could undertake this initiative in cooperation with regional and national development banks. This could be through loans for as little as US$50-100 to home-based industries. US$200 million seed funding could go a long way towards achieving a target of about 100,000 such loans by 2005. Improving life in cities. Small-scale waste treatment/recycling projects require financing of projects at the local level. Industrial countries, funding agencies and development banks could start by agreeing at the WSSD that 500 such projects will be financed by 2005 at a cost of US$0.5 billion, to be followed by 100 projects annually after that.

(iv) Protecting water resources. By 2005, some US$1 billion could be committed to wastewater and water treatment plans in the cities and towns of the countries in both regions and US$0.5 billion could be provided annually for that objective. This will also help towards alleviating the freshwater problems, especially in arid regions where most LDCs are located. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment (GPA) could be used as an example.

(v) This should be coupled with the adoption of demand and country driven regional river basin strategies, including all wetlands, estuaries and coastal areas associated with rivers, in an essential step towards the protection of freshwater

resources as well as wetlands, coastal and marine areas. This could take the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) as a basis for identifying priority areas in developing regions.

(vi) Targeting desertification should be based on the provision of funding to set up pilot projects that are community driven. Perhaps allocating some US$300 million for initiating an anti-desertification campaign in the African and Arab regions by 2005.

(vii) These water and land-based activities should keep in focus the need to protect and develop water and land resources for the purpose of enhancing food security in the two regions. To achieve these activities, some US$1 billion needs to be committed by 2005.

(viii) Protecting the earth's biodiversity. A target of increasing the percentage of protected area by 50% by 2005 and increasing forest cover, especially in equatorial and mountain areas, by 50% by 2005. The financial commitment could be in the order of US$250 million for each.

(ix) Addressing climate change. Tackling the issue of energy should be coupled with adopting appropriate cleaner production strategies in existing fuels and energy producing systems. This may require a target date and funding around US$0.5 billion by 2005. Within this context the conclusions of the Marrakech conference of the parties to the UNFCCC should be fully implemented including presenting a follow up report at WSSD.

(x) Transfer of appropriate technology. Developed countries should further be committed to facilitate the transfer of appropriate technology to developing countries, including the provision of information technology and advanced communication facilities which would enable developing countries to enhance the sustainable use of resources, transportation and energy, and enable them to effectively follow up and implement the policies of sustainable development.

Further there is a need to establish an appropriate monitoring strategy for the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit. The establishment of means for monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development programmes and assess the degree of the harmonisation and effectiveness in achieving the goals is a major requirement. This should include the development of harmonised indicators and criteria for monitoring and follow up on sustainable development and periodic assessment to readjust the course of development to ensure sustainability.